

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW AUSTRALIAN SNAKE.

BY J. DOUGLAS OGILBY.

(Communicated by Edgar R. Waite, F.L.S.)

HOPLOCEPHALUS WAITII, sp.nov.

Head broad and depressed, distinct from trunk ; pupil round. Rostral very little broader than deep, visible from above ; frontal longer than broad, equal to or a little longer than its distance from the end of the snout, but little shorter than the parietals ; one pre- and two postoculars ; temporals 2 + 2, the posterior pair small ; upper labials 6, the third and fourth entering the eye ; two pairs of chin-shields, the anterior the larger, in contact with three, rarely two, labials, the posterior pair wholly separated by two elongate scales. Scales in 21 series, the outer rows scarcely enlarged ; ventrals sharply keeled laterally, 210-223 ; anal plate entire ; subcaudals in a single series, 47-57.

Colours.—Head above bluish-gray ; prefrontals with a yellowish tinge, and with a black spot covering their posterior half ; a small black spot above the eye ; a large spot at the inner anterior angle of the parietals followed by a smaller one ; a broad white band behind the head, continued forwards to the eye ; an elongate black spot behind the parietals, and two spots on either side of them ; a black streak from the eye to the nostril ; upper and lower labials obliquely banded with black and white ; a black nuchal band extending forwards to the angle of the mouth ; lower surface of head white, with scattered white spots : entire upper surface of body uniform dark brown ; lower surface grayish-brown, becoming darker posteriorly, that of the tail similar to the back.

Some months ago I received from Tamworth a specimen of a snake, which I put aside without examination, referring it to *H. pallidiceps*, Günth. ; being now engaged in drawing up diagnoses of the members of this genus, I made an examination of this specimen with the result that I discovered that my example had twenty-one series of scales round the body, not fifteen as in the true *pallidiceps* ; I had in the meanwhile discovered in the Museum collection a much mutilated specimen of the same snake from the Dubbo district, which, wherever it was possible to examine it, agreed absolutely with the Tamworth example ; this suggested to me the advisability of examining Krefft's specimen, which I did in the presence of Mr. Edgar R. Waite, with the result that we found that both it and another specimen labelled *pallidiceps* in the Museum collection belonged to this new species. Krefft's description of *H. pallidiceps* (*Snakes of Australia*, p. 59), being merely a copy of Günther's original diagnosis (*Catalogue of Colubrine Snakes*, p. 214), is correct for that species, but it must be borne in mind that the head figured by him (*op. cit.* pl. xi. fig. 1) belongs rightly to *H. waitii*, not to *H. pallidiceps*.

Krefft's specimen has no locality attached, and the habitat of the species, therefore, so far as at present known, is restricted to the central district of New South Wales, where it takes the place of the North Queensland *pallidiceps*.

The measurements of the largest of the four examples are :—
Total length 475 mm. ; tail 62 mm.

Type in the Australian Museum ; register number, 6590.